

AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
LANDHOLDERS,
MERCHANTS,
AND OTHER
PRINCIPAL INHABITANTS,
OF
ENGLAND,

ON THE
Expediency of entering into Subscriptions
for augmenting the British Navy.

L O N D O N :

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A. D. B. R. S.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

TH E objections made to the measure of subscription are so futile, that arguments to refute them would be unnecessary, were they not powerfully supported by the feelings of present interest in mens minds. On the contrary, the soundest arguments lose very much of their force when our pockets are to produce the testimonials of our conviction.

The nation needs to be exhorted more than reasoned with ; to be roused more than to be convinced.

I imagine no one is doubtful about his right to make a donation to government if he pleases, or apprehends any fatal consequences from his using his privilege ; but many are not sufficiently attentive to the expediency of doing it ; they are not aware of the nation's danger ; they regard the present sacrifice more than the future gain.

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With an attempt, therefore, to refute such objections, I have endeavoured to point out the people's true interest, and shew that frugality in this matter is likely to turn out but an unthrifty policy.

I have sounded the alarm of approaching danger from without ; more alarming from dangerous schisms within, from secret and insidious machinations, which no duties divine or human can suppress, no ties social or moral can restrain ; which threaten to involve the nation in ruin, if by a national effort they are not destroyed.

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A N
A D D R E S S , &c.

O N T H E

Expediency of entering into Subscriptions
for augmenting the British Navy.

CIRCUMSTANCED as we are at this critical period of the war, one would have imagined there needed but a single example of public spirit to have kindled it as a flame through the nation.

Britain is contending, singly, against the greatest powers of Europe and America combined.

She is not seeking to extend her dominions, or increase her power: she combats only to preserve her ancient possessions, and protect her extensive commerce: and while, struggling against an unequal force, she sees her islands wrested from her, her trade at the mercy of the enemy, and her fleet (her boasted bulwark) no longer equal to her defence; her very existence as a nation becomes at stake; and the time calls for the firm, the

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zealous,

zealous, and unanimous exertions of the people at large, to repel the ruin that threatens them. If any unfortunate jealousies should subsist between the government and the people, about the limits of prerogative or the extent of privilege, the alarm of a foreign enemy, that threatens alike the annihilation of both, should unite all parties, and cement all distinctions, in support of a common interest.

The county of Suffolk have nobly stood forth a precedent in this necessary business, and are carrying on a subscription for building a seventy-four-gun ship; persuaded that by her navy alone the nation can be preserved. Throughout Great-Britain there has not been found a county to second the example. Devon has opened a subscription for granting a bounty to seamen. Suffex has met and talked of doing something. Men are certainly wanted, and more will be wanted as more ships are built. But will the county of Devon raise a fund for giving bounties to seamen equal to what would be requisite to build a ship of the line? If not, it may be feared that the money, which would be raised in either case, was more considered than the question whether ships or men were most wanted.

At any rate, no other county has done any thing. Public spirit is not seen. The measure, so nobly begun, droops in the onset. Men go about their affairs in unconcerned security. No danger is apprehended. The nation slumbers: nor has the call of Suffolk been able to rouse her sister counties.

But, not only has the conduct of the county of Suffolk failed of imitation; it has not even escaped censure. It has been pronounced to be a measure pregnant with evil. An
alarm

alarm has been spread, and future mischiefs to this country have been presaged from so rash and unadvised an undertaking. If these fears be well founded, rightly indeed does the nation hesitate, and sad is her alternative, between the coming danger from without, and the hazards that attend the means proposed to guard against it.

It is the design of this address to enquire into these dreaded evils, and develope the source of this alarm ; to disperse visionary and ruinous fears, and to urge the necessity of providing for our own safety before it is too late.

“ The measure in question,” it is said, “ is unconstitutional : Parliament is the only authority that can grant supplies to the state : this is their most sacred privilege : all innovations are highly dangerous, and subversive of the constitution.”

This wears the face of a very serious and heavy charge upon the people of Suffolk, and all aiders and abettors in their undertaking. But the fallacy of the argument is too evident to escape the most uninformed. Parliament is the only authority that can grant, that is, that can authoritatively raise, supplies to the state. The king cannot do it at his own discretion ; the representatives of the people have this privilege in trust for them. But are the people, in their own persons, not allowed to give to the king, because he has no right to demand ? Are they improper donors of their own bounty ? incompetent to judge of occasions of liberality ? and unauthorised to bestow their free-will offerings ? An insult, this, to common sense and to the nation.

“ It is alleged, that this mode of granting supplies will render
 “ the minister independent on parliament, and thus remove the
 “ only security provided by the constitution for his fidelity.
 “ Regiments may be raised in this way, the precedent once esta-
 “ blished. The Palladium of liberty will be removed; the
 “ throne will become absolute.”

Because the people, sensible of the alarming inferiority of our navy to that of our enemies, exert themselves one and all to augment our marine, must they also, without any such necessity, add regiment to regiment? Or will the king become authorised to compel a second contribution for *his* purposes, making a precedent of the first voluntary subscription raised by the people for their *own* defence? If fifty ships of the line were added to our navy by the people's subscriptions, would no parliamentary aids be then wanted to man, supply, repair, and pay, a fleet so greatly augmented? Would the navy-estimates be reduced, or the various exigencies of the current year be diminished? They must be, I confess, very much deeper politicians than I am who can see these consequences.

But let us admit that the people, pleased with the novelty of the thing, and the consequence, the loyalty, or the patriotism, of granting government aids by subscription, should go on with the measure; should assemble at their county-meetings and their town-halls, and throw into the minister's lap such profuse supplies that parliamentary grants should become no longer necessary; where is the danger? where the minister's independence? The people at large would have in their own hands the very security their representatives only held before, strengthened

ened ten thousand fold ; for no bribes could he now employ but good actions ; no honours could he bestow but national greatness. And would not the people withhold their hands, and shut their purses, whenever he lost their confidence and their love ?

“ But it is not, it may be surmised, the spontaneous act of the people. The minister sends his emissaries about ; by insinuations, by persuasions, by delusive means, he as it were cajoles the people, and so sets the measure a going.”

No great compliment, it must be allowed, to the people's understanding. But, if there are any under-hand dealings, the cheat will be pardoned when it appears to be for the benefit of those deceived ; and it would turn out a very pleasant joke to see fifty additional ships of the line cajoling our enemies into good manners.

“ It is farther said to be a very indecent thing in the minister to ask money from the people's private purse, when they are and will be taxed by parliament for the self-same purpose.”

This, in the first place, is taking for granted that the measure originated with the minister. If it did so, the compliance of so many people in the county shews the people's approbation of it. They did not think it indecent. But what is indecent ? for the minister to impress the people with a just sense of their danger, and urge them to exert themselves in their own defence ? May England never want a minister so indecent ! And let the author of the pitiful charge blush for so atrocious a criminal, if he *can* blush.

Parliamentary

Parliamentary aids, though great, have not been sufficient. At least the fact is unquestionable, that the exigencies of the time call for great and immediate supplies. Our navy must be increased, or we are undone. Money must be raised for this, and the demand is large. Application to parliament is the regular way of going about the business; but for many reasons the mode of subscription is more eligible in the present instance.

In the first place, no additional burden is laid on the state, no debt is contracted, by this grant; no future taxes will be needed in consequence of it. The whole evil, the whole burden, is a temporary sacrifice, which a little retrenchment in luxury may replace. Whereas a parliamentary supply of the same sum would entail a heavy burden on posterity, and add to that enormous debt under which the state already labours.

In the second place, it would in fact be less burdensome to individuals. A less sum of money would actually be raised, because the net produce would be applied undiminished to the purpose.

Whereas, in all taxes, great sums are sunk in collecting and other contingencies, a tax therefore to build a certain number of ships must be productive of a much greater sum than need be raised by subscription for the same purpose. Taxes indeed raise only the interest of public grants. This adds to the grievance; for the high interest, added to the sums sunk in collecting, &c. in a few years would amount to the principal; but the debt continues, and is paid double and treble.

The manner of the grant would remove the grievance from mens minds. The matter being voluntary, the sum at every
one's

one's discretion, it would be a combination of the monied part of the people to protect their own property. It would be the compulsion of the time only, not of the state.

Taxes, on whatever they are laid, fall ultimately upon landed property and manufactories: for, as the price of provisions is advanced, the price of labour must, or the poor must consume less; in either case the value of property becomes diminished; so that, though subscriptions will come immediately from people of ability, and the poor will contribute no share, it does not, as might appear at first sight, increase the burden to the rich.

In the third place, it would be but justice to the poor, that, in times of public danger, the rich should do more, as they enjoy more, and have more to hazard.

The poor have nothing to lose: the labourer must work, whoever rules. If our trade is ruined and our merchants impoverished, our manufactories will be stopped, and thousands of working men will be deprived of their weekly earnings; they cannot purchase, as usual, bread, beer, &c. the farmer, hence, cannot pay his rent; the value of estates will fall to little or nothing. But these poor men *will* eat; you cannot starve them. It is not many years since we saw, in the tumultuous assemblings of the people all over England, what hunger will drive them to. They will take by force what now they earn by labour. They will subsist, and that they barely do now. Thus the consequences of our continued ill success in war will be felt chiefly by the rich and middling ranks: the poor can scarcely be in a worse state. Those, therefore, who will, in the mode by subscription,
give

give to the business, are those who are to be benefited by it, and are chiefly interested in it, which is but justice.

The general expences of government, for legislation and for defence, are levied by taxes falling in due proportion equally upon rich and poor, who receive alike the common benefits of the community.

The measure in question has one direct and sole object, the preservation of our foreign possessions and our commerce, our chief sources of wealth. Upon the rich, as has been shewn, the loss would fall; and there is a propriety in their taking upon them the burden.

Farther: those, who must suffer from the want of a sufficient fleet to protect our traffic, &c. would gain by its safety and increase. If by a vigorous effort England should start, as it were, into being, a superior fleet, and protect her trade to all parts, how soon would reviving commerce amply repay each individual donation! The influx of wealth by trade is not confined to merchants hands: it diffuses itself, and necessarily raises the value of every species of property.

In the fourth place, there could scarce be any misapplication of the money raised, or any doubt about it; nor would there be any delays in effecting the purpose for which it was supplied. It might be deposited in the hands of commissioners, and applied directly to the business.

It would give a peculiar satisfaction to every subscriber, to see a formidable ship of war, in which he has both a property and an interest, called by the name of his county, and, by the mouths
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of its cannon, speaking to the enemy the unconquered spirit of Britons.

From all these considerations, the advantage and propriety of building ships by the mode of subscription, rather than raising the same sum by parliament, is exceedingly evident. It is less injurious, more equitable, and more effectual.

To these advantages may be added one perhaps not the least considerable; that is, the effect it would produce in the minds of the enemy. When they see Britain unanimous, vigorous, and unexhausted, her people anticipating the calls of government by voluntary supplies, and united as one man in defence of their dearest rights, they will no longer hope to humble us to ignominious terms of peace. France will lower her haughty tone, and gladly accede to such a fair and honourable pacification as our sovereign has declared it his only wish to obtain.

It may be advanced, that our danger is not so urgent as is represented; that abroad we have gained a considerable advantage over the enemy; at home we have not declined the meeting with them. Our trade has, upon the whole, not suffered materially more than the enemy's.

Have we not been losers in the main in the war? Did any advantage follow the victory of our fleet, but the negative one of preserving Jamaica, which must otherwise have fallen? Are we not inferior to the French and Spaniards, without adding the Dutch to them? Are we not forced to carry on disadvantageous defensive operations? Can we more than barely keep the Channel while the combined fleet is out? If they should be tempted, at such a time, to attack us, we must al-

low the issue would be very doubtful, and a defeat would be ruinous. In the mean time we have not a ship to spare, to protect our northern trade or coasts. If a Dutch squadron should effect a junction with the combined fleet, they might effectually cut off our trade, without any opposition from us.

In short, it must be allowed that our trade has got in safe, from good fortune or the remissness of the enemy, not from our ability to protect it. We ought not to rely on a continuance of such good fortune ; nor is it reasonable to expect it, without a fleet equal at once to the guard of the Channel and of the North Sea.

The combined forces of the enemy, though we should gain another battle and capture several of their vessels, (an event, from their superiority, highly improbable,) might still continue superior to us, and no essential benefit accrue from victory. On the contrary, the loss of seven or eight sail on our side would give the enemy so decisive a superiority, as to lay us absolutely at their mercy. On so thin a thread the fate of this kingdom is suspended.

The casual chances of war, favouring winds, the enemy's misconduct, (or rather, we should say, the care of Providence,) have hitherto kept us painfully struggling in an unequal contest. But, if we put not our own shoulders to the wheel, and strengthen our own hands, while we hope the aid of Providence, we have no reason to expect the continuance of its favour : numbers and strength must in the end prevail.

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It has been said, " the subscription in the county of Suffolk " is not voluntary." By what power is it then compelled? A ministerial mandate cannot do it; no power in Britain can do it. It cannot be any other than voluntary.

" But those, who collect the subscriptions, by their influence " in their neighbourhoods, or by their importunity, in some " measure compel; the argument *ad verecundiam* also is not to " be resisted."

If conviction compels the prejudiced to give, and shame forbids the penurious to deny, it argues *for* the propriety of the measure, not *against* it. Those who use their influence have first shewn the example; and the wretch, who has not spirit enough to give, according to his ability, in a public cause, ought to be urged by every motive that can induce or shame him to compliance.

Another objection to this measure has been, " that the people are deceived in the design of it. It is ostensibly to combat " France, Spain, and Holland; but the subjugation of America is the grand and ultimate object for which armies are to be " raised, and the nation drained of its blood and treasure."

As this is an objection that may have weight with many, I shall pay it some attention, and consider how well the truth of the charge stands attested; and, if true, how far it ought to influence the conduct of the nation.

Lord Shelburne has uniformly avowed his sentiments, that, whenever America is acknowledged finally independent, the sun of Great-Britain's glory is set.

That the king and his ministers view the independence of America as an event fatal both to the honour of the crown and the interest of the nation, there is no doubt : and, if the favourable issue of the war should enable them again to unite that country to the British empire, doubtless they would gladly embrace the opportunity.

If that is charged as a crime on government, it is not denied, nor has it been concealed. Here is therefore no collusion ; the people are not deceived by false promises and professions.

But the cheat is supposed to rest in this : that the people are roused to arms, a spirit of war is endeavoured to be diffused, and the strength of the nation put forth, against our natural enemies ; but the bow, when drawn, is to point its shaft against America, and the people made the innocent deluded instruments of slavery to their brethren.

It should seem, then, that the rumours of wars which spread through the nation, and the formidable combination of enemies with which we are affrighted, are false alarms industriously spread to answer sinister designs of government.

It cannot be true, what we have heard, that France is in close league, offensive and defensive, with America ; that Spain and Holland are combined with France ; and that almost half the world is in arms against us ; that we have lost, in the war, the greater part of our West-India possessions to France ; Minorca is fallen to Spain, and Gibraltar is invested by an immense army ; that the fleets of the enemy, in force almost double to ours, threaten our trade with annihilation ; that our resources of wealth are in the most imminent danger of being cut off ;
that

that the enemy insults our coasts, and perils threaten us on all hands.

If these are false alarms, then indeed are we deceived in the objects for which the nation is called to arms. But, if we wait for farther conviction of their truth, I fear we shall too late discover, that it is *we* have deceived, dreadfully deceived, ourselves.

If these are facts, the objection is false. To strengthen ourselves against France, Spain, and Holland, is the true and immediate object of all our present operations. This combination is too formidable, the danger with which they threaten us too imminent, the war is too near our home, for us madly to think of combating in America for right of dominion. A nearer and dearer property demands our care.

The very objection furnishes the strongest argument in favour of this mode of supply; that, by it, a spirit of war is diffused amongst the people. For heaven's sake what will become of us if there is not?

By subscription every man becomes a labourer in the business: one lays the keel, one shapes a mast, one furnishes a gun; and he that only drives a nail contributes something to the work. But all must feel an unmingled ardour, from the reflexion that they are increasing the true and natural strength of the island, from the greatness of which we have every thing to hope and nothing to fear. Britain can never be enslaved by her navy.

With regard to America, the object of the war is totally changed. America is united with our enemies: she will not, she cannot, make peace with us but through France. She bids us defiance,

defiance, and refuses to hear of offers of reconciliation. We cannot, therefore, separate her in the war : our enemies are to be considered as one, and their united endeavours are exerted to humble us : each seeks to gain something from us for herself. They would dismember the empire, and drain the vital stream that supports its existence. Thus humbled at their feet, France, the mistress then of Europe, would dictate to us terms of peace; and we may guess what terms she would dictate, in the insolence of power, to a hated rival: she would deprive us of every source of wealth; the West-Indies, already mostly in her possession, must be all her own; nor would she allow us much valuable territory in the East. She would raise her empire to such a greatness, upon the ruins of ours, as ever after to keep us at her feet. She would restrict our navy within a limited force, and tauntingly demand whose is now the sovereignty of the seas? Spain would regain Jamaica and Gibraltar; America would set up the standard of empire, and we could not expect long to keep possession of Canada. The Dutch would not fail of their share in the general plunder. A name would not be left us beyond the boundaries of our isle. Our sun would set indeed; and the glory of Britain, late extended through the earth, now faded, she would sink into contempt. Nor will France stop even here: she will not learn moderation in prosperity; on the next pretence she chooses to feign for a quarrel, she will invade our defenceless island, and set up the Gallic standard on the palace of our kings. This is the crisis to which the fate of Britain is tending: a peace dictated by France would lay the foundation of it. Nor would the issue probably be very far distant: every thing
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we lost France would gain ; every thing she gained she would keep. The balance would preponderate so far against us, that we could never hope to recover it.

On our part, our utmost hope, singly engaged against so powerful a combination, is to defend ourselves and obtain a fair and equitable peace. But peace will be purchased too dear if we give the enemy all their demands ; nor can we hope, by prolonging the war, that we can in the end prevail. One vigorous effort is our dernier resource ; let us collect our whole force at once, and try what we *can* do ; but, for God's sake, let us not quarrel with government about the mode of carrying on the war, or dictate where the force shall be aimed. We may all contribute something to strengthen government, but we cannot all govern ; we cannot be all ministers or all generals ; let us do our part, and leave them to do theirs. If the most discontented among us were permitted to conduct the war, would not others be discontented with him ? and where will it end ? This is no time for cavil ; let us supply government with ships, men, and money, enough, that wherever they fight they may conquer. The enemy is a common enemy, and it is our business to attack him in the most vulnerable part, where most is to be gained or least to be lost. Wherever we gain an advantage the enemy lose one. We may weaken France in America ; we may recover America in France. Wherever we gain a point it increases our consequence, and will weigh in our favour in adjusting the balance of treaty.

Now, to give way to dissensions, to let party-opinions hold our hands, to refuse to strengthen government because we like
not

not this man or this measure, is equal madness and desperation as if a man should set fire to a ship, and consume himself with the crew, because he cannot have the command of her.

Every thing that can be dear to men, every thing that ought to be held sacred in society, is at stake in this important contest. Not the pride of a monarch nor the ambition of a minister, not lust of power nor increase of dominion, now calls us to war: the honour of the nation, the fame of our former valour, the glory that our ancestors earned with their blood, and transmitted unfulfilled to us, is in danger of foul disgrace.

Shall we basely surrender up the precious deposit, our paternal inheritance, our posterity's unalienable right? Shall we ruin ourselves and rob our children? Born to freedom and privileges which no nation besides enjoys, shall we bequeath them only slavery, ignominy, and disgrace? If honour affects us not, if we have no sense of shame, if we are void of every spark of public spirit, our interest is equally concerned. On the power of the state depends its commerce; commerce is the sinews of our strength and the fountain of our wealth; poverty awaits the ruin of our commerce; the dearest concerns and comforts of life are in danger of being snatched from us.

In this alarming crisis we are gravely told, that it is not against France, Spain, and Holland, but against America, that our force is to be turned. For heaven's sake, let us not listen to idle declamations: it is the voice of the never-dying spirit of faction, the evil genius of the land: it is meant to divide us, and *now* to divide us is to ruin us. Unanimity alone can save us; if we are unanimous we shall be invincible. Let us exert ourselves

ourselves with a resolution worthy our rank among nations, rather let us lose all in nobly defending ourselves, than tamely sit down desponding in danger; our resources are yet great, but our foreign territories are the spring whence they are drawn, and our navy alone can protect them; the moment is now in our power, it will soon be lost for ever. One vigorous, unanimous exertion will change the face of affairs; let us devote ourselves seriously to the work; open, every county, a subscription and build a ship. Let us strengthen, with all our might, the hands of government; but it is not government we shall serve, it is ourselves and our children. Parsimony now is profusion, is madness, is ruin.

Ours is a forlorn hope; if we despair we perish, no retreat is left us; let us boldly on, let us regain the dominion of the sea, strain every sinew to that end; let the exertions France is making stimulate us to outdo them; they are making subscriptions to strengthen their marine, they are building ships for the state; shall we be left behind in liberality and in fortitude by Frenchmen? it must not, cannot be. Britain, once roused to put forth her strength, will rise superior in adversity, her enemies will be awed, and will gladly hearken to terms of honourable peace.

Whatever may be the future designs of ministry towards America, or our opinion of that matter, it ought not to have a moment's thought in the present instance; for now the question is not, whether we shall conquer America, but whether we shall defend ourselves, if *that* can be a question.

France has pledged herself for the independence of America, we need not therefore be solicitous about it, if any among us so

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ardently

ardently wish for that event. But the dismemberment of the colonies will not content her, our final downfall alone can gratify her boundless ambition.

Before this country will be in a condition to resume the thoughts of subduing America, it is probable the present ministry and the present generation will have little interest in the matter.

But it is certain the idea of taxing America in this country is wholly given up. No one is so mad as now to entertain it. The utmost wish and hope of government is, that America, with all the privileges she can ask, might again acknowledge allegiance to the British sovereign. But neither is that the object that now calls their attention. Offensive operations are actually put a stop to in America, and the thoughts of recovering what we have lost give place to those of preserving what remains.

Lastly, It is said, "That, were the measure in question in all respects eligible, it would be opposed while the earl of Shelburne is at the head of affairs." This is at length speaking plain. This cogent argument is at the bottom of all the rest.

This is the diabolical spirit that has been England's bane. Public and private good is given up; duty, honour, and interest, all vanish, when pique and revenge take place in the mind. The cloven foot appears; the people cannot be deceived. Let us banish the dæmon, party, and all unite in one common cause, before the thundering cannon of the enemy open our eyes to our danger, before their ships incircling our coast, and their troops incamped upon our plains, bring the war to our houses, and slaughter and desolation o'erspread our peaceful fields.

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It is not intended to insult lord Shelburne here with a panegyric. His character as a minister will be understood, and will have justice on a future day.

Let present facts have their due weight. He has taken the helm of state at a period the most perilous and critical that ever Britain saw. The time is no time for ministers to loll in luxurious ease, to bask and ripen in the sun-shine of a court. It is a time of incessant toil, of unabated vigilance, and of deep responsibility. At present, however, the *gratitude* of the nation is not very sensibly excited.

But how has lord Shelburne begun the execution of his trust? The national cry was for peace and the independence of America. He might have made easy work of it, and, by a few more trifling sacrifices, doubtless have ended the war.

Had he consulted his own ease and the *vox populi*, he would have adopted this mutilating system; and to do this no very profound abilities were requisite. But he aspires to bring us peace on more advantageous terms, and applies himself in earnest to the work; a work, in which the consummate statesman, not the harmonious or the thundering orator, is wanted. Let me ask who will be the gainers if he succeeds? If a skilful surgeon should propose the preservation of a limb that a rash practitioner had condemned to be amputated, the patient must be an ungracious churl, and undeserving so much care, who should abuse the friendly design.

If every county in England were to build a ship, Scotland and Ireland would not be backward in their zeal for the common

cause; they would furnish great numbers of men, and if it should appear, as has been started by way of difficulty, that ships would be wanting for laying so many ships of the line at once upon the stocks, the surplus money might also be employed in raising men.

Many thousands of men and boys, it is well known, might be raised in England without injuring the farmer or the manufacturer. There are thousands eat the bread of idleness, and as many who live by the earnings of villainy; the one class should be encouraged to go as volunteers; the other the civil magistrate might be empowered to compel. Those, distributed through the fleet with such a proportion of seamen among them as would be absolutely necessary, would be fit for immediate service.

If the business was once begun in earnest, in a twelvemonth's time we might have 40 or 50 ships of the line nearly ready to launch; the men, recruited or impressed in the mean time, might be distributed as supernumerary hands on-board the fleet, where they would be learning their duty, and be ready immediately to man the new-built vessels. Such as could not be so disposed of should be provided with quarters till wanted, that no delay might be occasioned for want of hands.

So great and speedy an augmentation would place the marine of this country on so respectable a footing, that our enemies could no longer hope to give us laws. It would ensure us a peace favourable to our commercial interests; riches would flow in its ancient channels. The expenditure would be only as the seed which the husbandman lays in the ground, repaid a hundred fold by a plenteous harvest. Britain would be again majestic,
the

the ruler of the sea, the terror of her foes, the admiration of the world !

Such will be the happy and certain consequences, if we set ourselves in earnest to this necessary work. It is no speculative point, but a truth founded in long experience, and in its nature easily demonstrable.

The measure, if adopted by some principal men in different parts of the kingdom, would become fashionable; subscribing would be the rage. The ladies would dispense with some elegant trifles to figure on the navy-list. It would become matter of amusement, and a fleet would be equipped in a frolic.

But the time is critical. If we are compelled to accept a peace at the hands of France, she will assuredly put it out of our power again to disturb her quiet by our navy; the present now is ours. Let us, O let us embrace it while we may.

Countrymen, Britons, You are called upon, by all that you hold dear, to exert yourselves to seize this important moment. It is not the earl of Shelburne calls upon you, it is your national honour, your private interests, call upon you. Your wives, your children, your relatives, call upon you to regard their safety and happiness. The example of France, the danger that threatens, and the glory that awaits you, call upon you. Your foreign possessions, your paternal estates, your liberty, your religion, all in danger, call upon you; posterity calls upon you; nay, Providence itself calls upon you, in a late signal decision, to acquit yourselves like men. May they not call in vain !

While

While the above was in the press, an event took place that might have superseded this, or any other *verbal* disquisition upon the subject.

Sir James Lowther, it is said, waited on Lord Keppel, and, after signifying his concern that the county-subscriptions for building ships of war for the service of the state, went on with so little spirit, requested his lordship to present his humble duty to the king, and beg his acceptance of a ship, mounting 74 guns, completely rigged, stored, and manned, the expence of which he would defray out of his private fortune.

This is a magnanimity that has scarce a parallel in the history of the world. The greatness of the thought excites our astonishment, the virtue of the act surpasses all praise, it deserves to be recorded with the most heroic actions that adorn the page of history.

It is a reply to, and a confutation of, the cavils of opposition; such a reply as became a noble mind to give. Sir James stands forth a single champion in the cause he espouses, he throws down the gauntlet in the face of the world. Sum up, says he, all the charges that malicious faction can invent, I alone will answer them. I take them upon myself, and I defy them all. His address to lord Keppel contains a rebuke to the spirit of the times, and the tardiness of monied men, who have held back in this business, at once the most modest, yet the most noble, the mildest, yet the most severe.

Sir James, in this act of princely munificence, seems resolved to see if any latent sparks of nobleness yet remain in the torpid bosoms

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bosoms of his countrymen. He tries them in the face of their enemies, in the face of the world. They shall not want a great example, if yet they dare be great. This moment must decide our national character, our country's fate. If the ancient spirit of Britons be indeed no more, then, haughty Gaul, thou must prevail; our die is cast, and we submit!

T H E E N D.

